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Attacks on Truth and the Media
A study on the extent to which American newspapers react to post-truth politics and Trump by building a truth discourse

BACHELOR THESIS

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Abstract

Disregarding evidence, constructing own facts and appealing to emotions are characteristic for a post-truth environment and have become elements of post-truth politics used by official figures for political benefit. The development does not only challenge our understanding of truth, but puts the very foundations of democracy at stake. The media is increasingly under attack from post-truth politicians and loses trust from the public. As a central actor shaping public discourse it can have the ability to react to post-truth by building a truth discourse to recreate a shared understanding of facts, an informed public and to reestablish the power of truth as a tool for solving society's problems.

This thesis examines the discourse built by American newspapers in reaction to post-truth politics after the election of Donald Trump as president of the USA. Therefore, three major concepts of truth, post-truth politics and the role of the media are reviewed. The analysis builds on other scholars' theoretical assumptions on the existence of truth, implications of post-truth politics such as 'illusory democracy' and the media's ability to shape (truth) discourse. Through the discourse analysis of 95 articles from six American newspapers, this study has identified discursive elements of the media's reaction to post-truth politics and its construction of a truth discourse. The findings suggest that newspapers rely heavily on the presentation of facts, using credible sources and objective reporting to build their truth discourse. Although attacks on the outlets have gained considerable attention, prioritizing aggression of Trump, reactions and opinions are to a large extent limited to editorial articles. The media is zealous in making the distinction between reports and editorials, in which it can voice its concerns and criticisms. Nevertheless, the newspapers' defense as a political actor is more pronounced than its ability to reestablish truth, which is expected to be a consequence of the political attacks by Trump. This thesis contributes to the debate on post-truth politics and delivers insights on the reaction and engagement of mainstream media.

Keywords: post-truth, post-truth politics, truth discourse, media, discourse analysis, newspapers, democracy, political actor

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1. Introduction

'This is fake!', or is it the truth? One of the most occurring terms in contemporary newspapers is the word 'fake'. We find 'fake news, fake reports and alternative facts' all over the media reports on recent political events and in statements by new US president Donald Trump, but also a considerable decline of trust in the news institutions. No wonder that the Oxford Dictionary declared "post-truth", the concept behind the statements, as word of the year of 2016. This is a highlighter on how the - actually not at all - new phenomenon of post-truth politics and fake news has become a synonym for the time we live in. Given the currency of the topic and consequently sparse academic research, this thesis aims at the analysis of specific language and strategies used by the media to perpetuate truth, and to demonstrate the relationship between political and social truth discourse and political ideologies. 'Post-truth politics' describes a situation, political action and thinking, where facts are no longer in the centre of attention. The truth of a statement stands back behind its emotional effect, mainly on the own interest group. The communication ideal of the enlightenment needs, in order to meet its ethical standards, validated arguments and discursive facts. In contrast, in a post-truth debate facts are neglected, distracted or turned unclear, without having an influence on the relevance to the audience. It is only decisive for the interest group whether the statement has a close connection to their feelings and emotions.

The change observed today has lead away from a period of hope, opportunity, connection, expression and democracy predicted by the invention and popular use of internet and is replaced by chaotic and careless growth of data, allowing the deterioration and pollution of the infosphere. In the internet, many sought entertainment and increasingly found it in their respective echo chambers, but not a deeper understanding, dialogue or education that would have created societal profit (cf. Floridi, 2016). The growing appetite for conspiracy theories populism is not a new problem, but intensified by the way in which huge amounts of data are created without a specific use and not verified or analysed for truth. Facts can serve as a mean to settle arguments between opposing perspectives and simplify the matter. Look, for example, at politicians who disagree over the right economic policy: if they can agree on certain facts, there is a shared stable reality that they can argue over (cf. Davies, 2016). In contrast to facts, data allows to sense shifts in public sentiment. Methods such sentiment analysis (cf. Pang & Lee, 2008) allow to collect data from a broad range of sources and convert it into a narrative on the future. Thereby politicians can rely on data to make forecasts, without necessarily establishing a fact, creating noteworthy possibilities for politics. Since these data-based forecasts can fluctuate and numbers are viewed more as indicators of current sentiment - unlike facts which equal statements on reality - the ability to maintain consensus on problems and to find a shared solution is called into question (cf. Davies, 2016). In a time where politics and politicians can use (social) media to create a truth of their own, regardless of the truth, these discourses spread rapidly and seemingly limitless.

In addition to the challenges posed by big data, media is in a difficult position. In 2016, trust in news organisations has been at a historical low (Saad, 2016), with politicians even intensifying this emotion through declarations such as 'fake news', 'enemy of the people' and 'the press is reporting it wrong'. Media is perceived as to be under threat, despite having the task of being a truth producing infrastructure needed in these times of uncertainty and divergence about facts.

If post-truth politics continue, the power of truth as a tool for solving society's problems could be lastingly reduced. "When a fact begins to resemble whatever you feel is true, it becomes very difficult for anyone to tell the difference between facts that are true and "facts" that are not" (Viner 2016). Usually it is clear that we do not mean that there is no truth. But, as the last years have made very clear, societies often cannot agree on what this truth is, and when there is no consensus about the truth and no way to achieve it, chaos is expected to follow soon (Viner, 2016).

This research has a high degree of societal relevance, by addressing an urgent problem of today's society. It examines both the perceived threat of fake media and the lack of trust in mainstream media by analysing the articles upon their ability to build a truth discourse. Further, it addresses the difficulties of living in an area of post-truth politics, where emotion matters more than truth, facts and reality. The relevance of research and contribution to this study to the academic debate and society is intense, demonstrated by the rapidly increasing number of new research projects in the field, outstandingly the new study performed by the News Integrity Initiative (NII) of Jeff Jarvis. For the research on the spreading of fake reports, Jeff Jarvis has just received 14-million-dollar funding from a global alliance of industrial organizations. In this global alliance, institutes from all over the world take part in the project, which signifies the world-wide relevance and interest post-truth as a field of research has recently gained. This study contributes to the scientific debate, since it investigates the link between media and post-truth politics through newspapers discourse, an element which has not yet gained much scientific attention. Increasing trust in journalism and better inform the public conversation (NII statement) has gained great awareness after the US American campaign and election in November 2016. But also in Europe, and especially in Germany - where general elections come up on September 24 – post-truth considerably enters public discourse and attention. For instance, Facebook has already enlisted a non-profit investigative journalism bureau, Correctiv, to expose and correct false stories posted on the social network.

1.1 Research question

Based on this outline of the problem and its scientific and social relevance, the paper will deal with the research question: **To what extent do the mainstream media engage in building a truth discourse in the age of post-truth politics?** It will be examined to what extent the media works as a truth producing infrastructure and fake-news are taken up in mainstream media discourses. This will give

insights to what extent the news media is successful in addressing the post-truth crisis and the replacement of facts by emotion. The questions asked are of a descriptive nature, and built upon the theoretical concepts of truth, post-truth politics and the role of the media as truth maker.

This research question is especially important when taking into consideration that post-truth can be described as a development which is endangering democracy. The lack of fact-based discourses and some political leaders' from truth – like Trump's - creates a challenge for public and politics. Answering this research question aims at filling the academic gap on post-truth politics and the role of the media within this complex political theory. As van Dijk (2011) has stated, there is still a notable lack of mass media research. Oftentimes, media discourses have only been analyzed by linguistics, limiting the analysis to "rather abstract descriptions of isolated sentences and did not account for the various levels or dimensions" (van Dijk, 2011). There is an increasing number of scientific projects on why people and especially Americans' trust in the media is so extremely low and how people can react to a post-truth environment, but research on the content and discourses media creates as a response, especially through case studies, is sparse. Other researchers have so far delivered considerable insights on the implications of post-truth politics for democracy and changed media environments. This study intends to create important insights in the construction of truth by the media by delivering an academic understanding of the challenge to engage in building a truth discourse and ambitions to increase trust in the media. On top of that, it seeks to find out to what extent knowledge on the difficulties of living in a post-truth era is formulated by one of the major sectors shaping public discourse, namely mainstream media. In order to find out about truth discourses of the media, US American newspapers have been chosen as the case for this research and articles have been collected from between December 2016, after Trump's election as president, until April 2017, covering Trump's first months in office. The decision has been made to study US American newspapers, because it seems that with the election of Trump, the USA have entered in a new reality of post-truth politics. Qualitative media discourse analysis of 95 newspaper articles inquires how the media reacts to increased criticism and to what extent it engages in building a truth discourse in reaction to a possibly dangerous post-truth environment. The analysis creates insights on discursive elements used by news outlets to react to the diminishing status of truth. The thesis starts out with the presentation of theoretical assumptions on the three major concepts in this study. Starting with a review - necessary for the further analysis - on what a truth discourse is, it will be presented what is understood as truth in this thesis, how it is built and how the role of data and facts in building truth can be assessed. In a next step, theories on post-truth and post-truth politics are presented, building on the concepts of the regimes of truth (Foucault, 2000) and post-truth (Harsin, 2015) as well as hypothesis on difficulties for democracy, leading even to 'illusory democracy' in the age of post-truth (Fish, 2016). Lastly, theories of the role of media and its ability to establish truth are shown and it will be examined how the media's role has developed and changed over time (Foucault, 2000) and to what extent the media established a truth keeping authority (Harsin, 2015). In addition, assumptions on the role of the media are derived (Patterson, 1997;

Collaghan & Schnell, 2001; Rose, 2014) as well as threats for truth in the media and systemic problems (Fish, 2016). In a next step, it is shown how the case of this study is constructed and how the analysis is to be performed, also pointing to the discursive elements that are expected to be found. In the following, the findings of the analysis are displayed and conclusions drawn on the relation between the findings of this case study and other scholars' theoretical assumptions.

2. Theory

In the following chapter, the three major, underlying concepts of the research question presented above, are reviewed. Firstly, it presented what is understood as truth and truth discourse. In order to do so, both philosophical ideas on truth and truth making will be reviewed, as well as historical approaches on the role of facts in truth will be reflected upon. This mixture of theoretical background is needed, since truth is a highly philosophical concept, which has experienced important changes in practice throughout the years and developments within. The historical understanding of facts as a tool for establishing truth is particularly important, since this paper addresses the relatively new phenomenon of post-truth politics, where there has been observed a drastic change in the relationship between truth and facts. Secondly, this part outlines what is scientifically understood as post-truth and post-truth politics. An important feature of post-truth regimes is the media, which is why this theme already comes up in this section. To find out how media discourse relates to post-truth politics, it is necessary to examine scientific assumptions on the role of the media within this new political system and foreseen implications. Thirdly, there is the assumption of the media being a generator of truth discourses. To investigate this concept, theoretical assumptions - on the role of the media in public discourse building, the media as a source of truth and the origin of today's criticism on media and journalism - have to be reviewed.

2.2 Truth discourse

Truth as a concept is often used with the underlying meaning of it as reality or facts. In modern contexts, there often is a reference of truth to self and authenticity. The opposite of truth in this sense is falsehood. Many human activities, ranging from journalism, science and law, depend upon this concept, although not explicitly making it subject of discussion but rather assuming its nature. Truth can be seen as both an agreement with fact and reality as well as possessing the quality of faithfulness, fidelity, sincerity and veracity. West Germanic continuations of truth have further introduced a terminological distinction as truth related to faith, trust and pact in the Dutch and German language. This study will rely on one of the major theories of truth, the correspondence theory. According to its defenders, truth corresponds to the actual state of affairs. The truth of a representation is determined by how accurately it describes things and its relation to external reality.

Truth is also related to discourse. This paper will rely further on the complex relationship Foucault (2000) has established between truth, discourse and power. Foucault argues that discourse is distinctive from ideology, since ideology makes a distinction between true statements and false statements, including the belief that facts aid in deciding between true and false. Still, statements about the social, political and moral world are never simply true or false, so that facts do not enable people to make a definite decision on truth as a consequence of the way interpretations of facts are constructed (Hall, 2006). Descriptions, although appearing false, can be made true as a result of people

believing and acting on that basis, resulting in real actions and consequences. Values enter descriptions; therefore, statements receive an ideological dimension. Nevertheless, truth is created by the struggle between competing discourses, with the concept of discourse as such sidestepping the problem of truth in ideology, but not the issue of power. Power produces knowledge, so that often it is power and not facts which are making things 'true'. Discourse is implicated in power, and is a system through which power circulates. Knowledge created by a discourse produces a kind of power. Those who produce the discourse have the power to make it true, enforcing its scientific status and validity (Hall, 2006).

As Poovey (2000) has argued, accounting was developed in late medieval times and has become a trend to represent society through facts. The advantage of merchant bookkeeping was its presentation of a type of truth that did not require any interpretation or faith on the part of reader (Poovey, 2000). In the following centuries, statistics, economics, surveys and other numerical methods added to the abilities of accounting. Despite the expansion of these methods, often the preservation was limited to institutions, academic societies and professional associations being able to uphold standards. An industry for facts emerged in the 20th century, when market-research companies began conducting surveys and later extended into opinion polling. Think tanks, established during and after World War II, mainly served to apply statistics and economics to the design of new government policies, usually for a certain political agenda. The idea of "evidence-based policy," popular among liberals, extensively used economics to justify government programs in a supposedly post-ideological age (cf. Poovey, 2000). Facts have received a different use and status in times of post-truth, and this new role will be outlined in the upcoming section.

2.3 Post-truth and post-truth politics

"Post-truth", the British Oxford Dictionary's word of the year of 2016, is defined as: "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief" (Oxford Dictionary, 2016). Post-modernism, relativism and constructivism have been identified by many philosophers as the intellectual roots of post-truth. Since everything is relative and stories are being made up all the time - there is no such thing as the truth, and this assumption has filtered its way indirectly into post-truth (Grayling, 2008). The origin and assumptions of post-truth differ entirely from the definition of truth outlined in the previous section. In contrast to the assumptions of the correspondence theory on truth, post-truth thinking rejects the idea of absolute truth. It is strongly shaped by constructivism and critical theory assuming that truth is constructed by social, historical and cultural processes and shaped by power struggles (Okasha, 2016). Constructivism reflects Kuhn's theory of paradigms, pointing to the idea that people live in a paradigm in which they have constructed a worldview, but are not aware of the paradigm (Kuhn, 1996). In the paradigm shift from truth to post-truth, the result is crisis. In post-truth, absolute truth and objective

reality are rejected, and replaced by the idea that truth can be constructed, knowledge is context-bound and that truth is more about what people feel is true rather than what is empirically verifiable. Thereby, in a post-truth environment, truth can be talked into existence and conspiracy theories, which have formerly been dismissed, become part of the public discourse and political agenda. Post-truth is further intensified by social media and the platforms' use of algorithms. Although the manufacturing of news is not a new phenomenon, social media allows for false information to spread widely before anyone can challenge it (Harding, 2017). Algorithms of social media produce a bias towards the sensational, providing users mostly or only with stories and opinions they agree with and intensifying the perception that what they think is true through the repeated occurrence of claims in their filter bubbles (Harding, 2017). Another development within post-truth is the increasing institutionalization of lies. Organizations have developed whose main task is to publish false information and create an environment which scholars have described as "weaponized lies" (cf. Levitin, 2017) or "Lies, Incorporated" (cf. Rabin-Havt, 2016). News have increasingly become related to corporate ownership and the idea of mass deception, engaging in fast creation of stories for gaining clicks and money and thereby becoming part of everyday life and a changed media environment.

What effect has post-truth on the political reality? Fish (2016, p. 211) has emphasized that recent developments can also be observed in international politics and have shown an "uneasy attitude" of politicians towards "information, truth, evidence and expert opinion". Post-truth politics are characterized by being a form of politics where there is a "willingness to issue warnings regardless of whether there is any real sense of the events being likely to come about, or make promises that there is no real commitment to keeping, or make claims that there is no real reason to believe are true, all for the purpose of gaining an electoral advantage" (Fish, 2016, p. 211). This has significant consequences for international as well as national politics (Fish, 2016). It is often argued that this is how politics always used to be or simply must be. Politicians are said to be doing whatever is needed to gain votes or advantage over rivals. It is hardly as though politics has ever been synonymous with truthfulness.

The problem to be found in modern post-truth politics is the contradiction to what is understood as democratic governance (Fish, 2016). Voting takes an important role in a democracy, since it is the means by which the public engages in the government of their country, "directly or through freely chosen representatives" (the United Nations, 1948). In this way, governments are created that "deriv[e] their just powers from the consent of the governed" (the US Declaration of Independence, paragraph 2). For democratic decision-making, these notions of freedom and consent are fundamental. As Fish points out, it is here where we find the dilemma of post-truth politics: "The attitude towards information that characterizes 'post-truth' politics is in direct conflict with this feature of democratic decision-making" (Fish, 2016, p. 212). In other areas of life, such as medical treatment or trading, there is consensus that consent can only occur when certain conditions are met (Fish, 2016). Informed consent requires the provision of the respective person "with an explanation of their condition and the options available to them, including a balanced assessment of the expected risks and

side effects of the different options", while ensuring that this information is presented to the patient/customer in such a way that the person, without being deceived or misled, "can adequately understand what [is] being told" (Fish, 2016, p. 212). The duties have been raised under the assumption, that *"people cannot fully exercise their freedom to choose – that is, cannot truly consent to a course of action"* - when they are provided with false or misleading information, or when accurate information relevant to their decision is withheld (Fish, 2016, p. 212). But why does this not play a role, when consent of the governed is a cornerstone of legitimate democratic process? When politicians make misleading claims or withhold relevant information, then voters can hardly be characterized as informed, which makes it also impossible for them to give consent. Fish sums it up the following way:

> "The attitudes that characterise post-truth politics, then, will create situations in which
> what appear to be consensual free choices – the marking of particular options on ballot papers,
> for example – do not in fact count as free choices after all. The appearance of democratic
> consent is simply illusory" (Fish, 2016, p. 212).

Another characterization of post-truth regimes has been enacted by Jayson Harsin (2015). He describes these regimes as corresponding to developments of post-politics, "where issues, discourses, and agency for sociopolitical change remain constrained, despite the enabling of a new range of cultural and pseudo political participation around, among other things, truth" (Harsin, 2015, p. 327) The Regimes of Post Truth (ROPT) emerge out of strategies "common to control societies where especially resource rich political actors attempt to use data-analytic knowledge to manage the field of appearance and participation", via attention and affect (Harsin, 2015, p. 331). Although Harsin addresses the role of the media in Post-Truth Regimes, he adds a new feature to the characterization of ROPT: the idea of "truth markets".[1] Michel Foucault (2000) has once determined media and political apparatuses as dominant in the circulation and maintenance of truth, but according to Harsin, these apparatuses have been transformed over the last 30 years. An interesting feature of this transformation is the "explosion of fact-checking and rumor-debunking sites", although none of these has been able to reestablish a truth keeping authority (Harsin, 2015, p. 328). Harsin has been developing a theory of rumor bombs, given famous examples such as "Obama is a Muslim with a fake birth certificate", identifying them as news items "that have taken up considerable space in the attention economy" (Harsin, 2015, p. 328). It might still be necessary to contrast the Post-truth regimes of today to regimes of truth as outlined by Foucault:

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[1] Therefore, this section has been added to the theoretical assumptions on post-truth politics, despite its addressment of the media, which is the center of theoretical assumptions in the next theory section.

"Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth. That is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (Foucault, 1976/2000, p. 130).

According to Foucault, media has an important function as "the object, under diverse forms, of immense diffusion and consumption, produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses, [and being an] issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation" (Foucault, 1976/2000, p. 131). Harsin (2015) builds his update upon the theoretical assumptions of Foucault, made necessary through regimes-of-truth changes, as a result of globalized media technology, political economical (neoliberal) changes, political communication and ideological changes.

The geography of news and truth has changed, as well as the temporality of its consumption. New media allows being up-to-date 24/7, with news unfolding "in a highly affectively charged attention economy of constantly connected cognition" (Harsin, 2015, p. 329). What can be observed is a fragmentation, segmentation and targeted content of news, so that Harsin proposes to speak of "truth markets", where opinions and reactions are "planned, produced, and managed by big data-driven predictive analytics and resource-rich strategic communications" (Harsin, 2015, p. 330). The shift goes from self-organizing and reflexive forms of expression and participation as describes by Warner (2005) towards markets of truth, through user-generated content, marketing, algorithms, liking and sharing. "Resource-rich elites have analyzed and attempted to manage the breakdown of mass audiences and markets, opting to exploit and encourage the recognition of skepticism toward cultural authorities in journalism, politics, and the academic disciplines, each with their expert" and are multiplying truth claims whose meaning, if not veracity, is not easily or quickly confirmed (Harsin, 2015, p. 331). Citizen consumers are led to believing that there is no way to ultimately verify truth, so that they believe in truth of their own truth arbiters in their market. Post-truth has a narcissist element. Everyone can publish their opinion easily on social media with the assumption: my opinion counts more than the facts and if the there is disagreement, this is an attack on the person and not his ideas.

2.1 The role of the media

As a primary site and source of modern political discourse, the news media have developed an important function in building public opinion and shaping public perception of what is true. The development of that role is to some extent a result of the media's eagerness to organize political information in a way that is interpretive and profitable, and thereby reaching out for society (Patterson 1997). It is widely accepted that serious journalism should entail evidence-based and impartial analysis of policy and politics, but tabloid, celebrity-based news can still make money, while more

serious, analytical news loses millions of dollars (Sambrook, 2013). While the media used to have contributed to public debate by signaling events only, in years to follow the media has lead consumers to develop new understandings of public events and social policy (Patterson, 1997). Currently, interpretive style journalism is the dominant style of reporting in the U.S, with facts and interpretation intermingled together in reports, giving the media corporations the opportunity to affect public opinion and political institutions (Patterson 1997; Callaghan & Schnell 2001). The media shape public opinion through the framing of news events and analysis, in which context framing is the "conscious, strategic effort to fashion meaningful accounts of events and the issues at hand in order to legitimate certain perspectives and actions" (Rose, 2014, p. 6). Research confirms that the way in which a news story is reported has effects on the perspective and reaction of those listening (Rose, 2014).

Originally, the dominant form of information was the printed page: knowledge was mostly delivered in a fixed format, one that encouraged readers to believe in stable and settled truths. Technological developments have taken away this distinctive power of the media and have spread it among an endless number of organizations claiming to present news and establish truth. Foucault (2000) has determined media and political apparatuses as dominant in the circulation and maintenance of truth, but these apparatuses have been transformed over the last decades. An interesting feature of this transformation is the "explosion of fact-checking and rumor-debunking sites", although none of these have been able to reestablish a truth keeping authority (Harsin, 2015, p. 328). What we see today is described as 'a series of confusing battles between opposing forces', where there are clashes between truth and falsehood, fact and rumor (Viner, 2016). Shared by these clashes is the diminishing status of truth. With oftentimes several conflicting truths on any given subject, the printing press possesses the power to determine things by printed words on a page, regardless of their truthfulness. Chippindale & Horrie (2013) defined truth in their history of the Sun newspaper, as a "bald statement which every newspaper prints at its peril". With information feeling like the truth, until there may appear an update or a correction, there is a common set of facts shared by society. The settled "truth" presented in printed news media was often an established truth, fixed in place by an establishment.

The threat for media by post-truth politics is present all over the news: headlines and articles deal with the erosion of trust in news media and the struggles of journalists to present truth and unmask fake news. All over the world, journalists have complained that over the past decade, "access to accurate information has become more difficult", and that political figures have shown signs of playing "fast and loose with the truth" (Fish, 2016, p. 211). Sambrook (2013) refers to a famous book by Malcolm Dean, where the media is to blame for its downward trend in addition to the difficulties arising from increased competition. The media is said to distort policy and politics, being meticulously researched and make sober reading for anyone who believes in the importance of public debate. Dean "also outlines seven deadly media sins: distortion, group think, being too adversarial, dumbing down, being too readily duped, emphasizing politics over policy and, of course, relentless negativity" (Sambrook, 2013, p. 164). According to his analysis, these 'sins' damage the democratic process that

freedom of the press is meant to support. Although there are famous examples suggesting that politicians are right to bemoan the press, others illustrate their complicity: difficult moral questions such as drugs are difficult subjects for both press and politics when trying to judge the public mood. Still, when neither press nor politics engage in a discussion, the public is denied a rational debate.

The mistrust between politics and media is the consequence of many reasons. Part of it is the exponential growth of media, leading to more competition for public attention and a rush for impact and celebrity to maintain sales. Further, politicians have seemed to fear attack and therefor have attacked the press in response, such as Tony Blair in his 'feral media' speech, making the relationship increasingly dysfunctional (Sambrook, 2013, p. 164). A systemic problem of the daily news is its poor memory, brief attention span, being better at reporting events than processes and demanding "from politicians and commentators a clear, simple narrative to cover even the most complex of issues" (Sambrook, 2013, p. 165). This spiral of hype and sensation can lead to the earlier explained post-truth environment, where political rhetoric and media coverage are entirely divorced from facts or evidence. Mainstream media is supposed to counteract these developments through the intensive use of social media tools in order to defend the truth, present the correct information and balance opinions.

There is also a great distrust of people on what is presented as fact, particularly when uncomfortable or out of sync with own views. Recent articles in newspapers leading to big furors in social media and public opinion, where journalists - after publishing the articles - declared that they were not sure whether they could rely on their source and if the story was true (e.g. the rumors about David Cameron's involvement in bizarre initiation rituals of a student fraternity), call the ability of the news media and journalism to establish truth in question (Sambrook, 2013). It looks as if journalists no longer need to believe their own stories to be true, nor to provide evidence. Instead it is handed over to the reader, not even knowing the source, to make up their own mind, although it is questionable on which basis the reader is expected to so. Developments as the one outlined here give an idea as to why it is important for the media to engage anew in building a truth discourse.

Some of the distrust towards the media might not be misplaced, with journalists behaving in a way that is immensely eroding public trust in the truth presented by the media. Over the past decade, American outlets such as PolitiFact, FactCheck.org, and the *Washington Post*'s Fact Checker have shaken up the political world by holding public figures accountable for what they say. Cited across social and national news media, these verdicts can rattle a political campaign and send the White House press corps scrambling (Sambrook, 2013). Yet fact-checking is a fraught kind of journalism, one that challenges reporters' traditional roles as objective observers and places them at the center of white-hot, real-time debates (Sambrook, 2013). As these journalists are the first to admit, facts can easily slip into fiction, and decisions about which claims to investigate and how to judge them are frequently denounced as unfair play. Next to the websites named above, more and more newspapers have engaged in fact checking. Among scientific papers, there is a general understanding that trusted

news organizations are needed to engage in building up a presentation of the truth that is required by their role as a primary site and source of modern political discourse, shaping public opinion.

3. Methods and Research design

The aim of this study is to analyze the discourse of mainstream media newspapers in the USA. The research design is that of a media discourse analysis. In accordance with other scholars' work, media analysis functions in this study as a practical tool to use principles of description in order to find out about structural properties of media discourse. Discourse is more than just an intervening variable between media institutions or journalists and the audience, but can be studied in its own right "as a central and manifest cultural and social product in and through which meanings and ideologies are expressed" (Van Dijk, 2011, p. 410), demanding an adequate analysis of the relation between media texts and context. Discourse analysis is a qualitative methodology in which a scholar interprets meanings of texts in relation to the systems of power that shape and form them (Hoy, 1999). The analysis of discourses involves the systematic study of texts to find out how the meaning and presentation of words create social reality. Discourse produces knowledge through language, being itself the outcome of the practice of producing meaning. On top of that, discourse is implicated in power and a system through which power circulates. Those who produce the discourse have the power to make it true, enforcing its scientific status and validity. The following sections of this chapter outline how the media discourse analysis in this study is enacted. According to Bell (1991) the analysis of media discourses demands decisions in three areas: The genres (referring to the type of media content), the outlet (the carriers of the content), and the outputs (the time period and specific news covered). In this analysis, the focus will be on print media, the carriers are American newspapers and the output covers articles from December 2016 to April 2017, starting after the election of Trump and including his first months in office. Newspapers constitute an adequate carrier of discourses and can react to the new political reality of Trump's presidency by the shaping of their truth discourse. In order to derive findings from the discourse, the following section will further explain which newspapers and articles have been selected and how they are analyzed by the use of a coding scheme.

3.1 Case selection

The case for this research is the truth and post-truth discourse in American newspapers. The case is constructed by using insights from six American newspapers and their development of truth discourses in reaction to post-truth politics. To identify the newspapers used for the analysis, different criteria have been applied. These criteria include: first, the quality of the newspaper, second, the ranking by circulation and trust in the newspapers and thirdly, the frequency to be criticized by Donald Trump or entitled fake news. The quality of the news organization is measured by the number of Pulitzer Prizes - one of the most prestigious awards in American journalism, which can be seen as 'the Oscar of newspapers'– the outlets have received in the last six years. It was started by ranking papers according to how many Pulitzer Prizes they have won. By counting the Pulitzer prize winners between

2011 and 2016, the different newspapers can be compared: The New York Times ranks first with 10 awards, followed by the Washington Post with five, the Los Angeles Times three, the Wall Street Journal two and the Chicago Tribune and the Guardian with one each. For the second category, a publicly available circulation ranking was used in which USA Today, The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Post, the Chicago Tribune and the Washington Post ranked among the eight most circulated newspapers ranging from over two million to almost half a million editions in daily circulation across the nation (Cision Staff, 2016). In addition to that, trust in the newspapers was measured by the ideological placement of the newspapers' readers, to highlight the level of trust the outlets receive from the political camps of the population (Pew Research Center, 2014). The third category includes the criticism of Donald Trump and its understanding of 'fake news'. Based on the number of Twitter posts between January and April 2017, as collected and presented by Die Zeit, the New York Times can be clearly identified as one of the most addressed opponents, with 20 tweets defining the New York Times (NYT) as the "enemy" publishing 'fiction' and fake news (Drösser, 2017, p.36). Additionally, the NYT journalists were excluded from White House press conferences after having been entitled 'fake news' in previous conferences. Further, another perceived enemy is the Washington Post, underlined by the lack of trust of conservative citizens in the US. In an interview with the Time magazine, Trump has further called the Wall Street Journal fake news.

Based on these criteria and the availability of articles online, the following six newspapers – in alphabetical order - have been selected: the Chicago Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Post, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post[2].

3.2 Data collection

Based on the case selection presented above, the newspaper articles are collected within the time span from Trump's election as president of the USA in November 2016 and his first months in office until April 2017. The data includes articles published between December 2016 and April 2017, adding up to five months. This time span is used because it is argued that Trump could only really engage in post-truth politics after his election, when preparing for entering as president-elect and after having taken office. One might contend that the electoral campaign already contained elements of post-truth politics, but it is argued here that electoral habits and actions differ from in-office behavior. It is not uncommon for candidates in a competition for votes to present the truth in a way that appeals the clientele they want to address, including an emotionalization of the audience and the presented claims. Interestingly for this study, Trump continues his lenient dealing with truth and facts after entering

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[2] please find the ranking based on the categories in Appendix II and note that due to financial means, USA Today could not be included in the analysis

office, which will allow for an intensive and substantive analysis of newspaper articles trying to shape a truth discourse in reaction to the new political reality.

The collection of material from the different newspapers aimed to summon articles on a shared topic. Statements of Trump which were identified as false or mostly false have been derived from the website 'Politifact' – an organization known for its fact-checking database of Trump statements - and used as a tool to identify reoccurring elements in newspaper articles. The collection has been added by articles that evaluate Trump politics in a more general way and ask fundamental question on truthfulness, trust and journalistic reactions. Despite the seemingly quantitative character of the study, articles were chosen based on these qualitative considerations. The result is N = 95 articles, which can be found in Appendix I. The study aimed at an equal distribution of articles from the different newspapers. The events and statements - in chronological order - identified for the article selection are including but not limited to:

> President Trump's statements on the number of people at his inauguration, Trump's attacks on judges and judiciary as a consequence of blocking the administration's ban on refugees, his criticism that certain terrorist attacks are not reported, the president's speech at a rally in Florida including his remarks on "Last night in Sweden", President Trump's speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference, Trump's claims about his role in the Flint water relief, his claims on Germany's NATO contribution and relationships with other American allies, the president's factor in Social Security increases, his promise to bring back coal jobs in the US, his claims on rising crime rates in US cities, his various attacks on the press including different statements in which he called it "fake media" as well as the relationship between Trump and the media, his accusation of having been wiretapped by the Obama administration, the criticism on the Affordable Care Act and the Health Bill failure and lastly the topic of climate change denial.

Special interest has been paid to fact-checking articles and editorials expressing the relationship between Trump, his dealing with truth and the media. The articles are organized according to their publishing organization and numbered in chronological order, to allow references in the analysis. The number before the dot refers to the newspaper, the one after refers to the point in time it has been published. In addition, in the data set the opinion or editorial articles have been highlighted in grey and fact-checking articles in red.

3.3 Method of data analysis

The focus in the selection of articles was set on the dealing with statements by Donald Trump which have been identified as false or which are addressing the truthfulness of Trump's accounts. This allows for an examination and comparison between different discursive elements employed by the media when addressing the same subject in order to draw conclusions on the discourse as a whole. This makes it possible not only to examine to what extent the media tries to construct a truth discourse, but also how this creation is a reaction to post-truth politics. By choosing articles who address the element of untruth as a defining feature of post-truth politics, it can be ensured that media pays close attention to the relationship between truth and post-truth.

The thesis considers threats of validity in the study. First, the threat of reverse causation to internal validity could be dismissed, since the study consists of two elements: the political events or statements and newspaper articles; in each case, the event takes place before the newspaper reports on it. Still, it is here where the threat of spuriousness can be found. It is possible that the way the truth discourse is built within the articles can be explained differently than just being a (neutral) reaction of the newspapers to political events. The way the discourse is shaped may be a consequence of the ideological leaning of the journalist or the newspaper, the will to write in a way that is appealing to the readers, or the need to publish articles as fast as possible for earning money through higher circulation. Next to these threats, also threats to external validity were taken into consideration. When speaking of external validity, it is thought of the generalizability of the study. In this case, the study should be generalizable for the whole US or other countries in which post-truth politics occur. Here, it can be difficult to generalize the study, since differences between countries, like for example the US and European countries, their politics and media, and differences due to the progression of time and change of political reality need to be expected. It would be compelling to see how the discourse is affected and reacts to the progression of post-truth politics and differs in country-level comparison. Nevertheless, to increase the level of generalizability of this study, it was aimed at including news outlets which are representative for the USA. Among these newspapers both conservative and liberal leaning outlets can be found and all of the selected have a high number of readers.

Theoretical considerations on truth discourse allow the development of a tool for analyzing the data selected above in order to get an answer to the research question. In the following, the coding scheme for analysis as well as the reasons for its construction and expectations on what is to be generated is presented.

Increasing the scientific status	Context of the article	Presentation of competing discourses	Identification of media as truth producer	Threat to the media	Presentation of truth
Sources named in article	Political context, event	Alternative Fake Different	Defending media as truth creator	Attacks of Trump	Facts Actually Data
Reference to science	Statement Speech Congress	Wrong Claim Lie	Shaping public opinion through outlining political tactics	Criticism by other newspapers	True/truth Verification Clarification
		Evaluation of creator/consumer of competing discourse (e.g. Liar)	Education of the reader	Criticism by the public	How to react to the threats and reestablish truth

The first feature for analyzing the creation of truth discourses is the dimension of increasing the scientific status of facts to increase the power of establishing truth. This category will measure the reliance and mentioning of sources of knowledge for the facts presented in mass media and references to scientific reliability of the presented truth. This in accordance with the assumption that the creator of the discourse can enforce its value by increasing scientific validity and a reaction to 'sources say' criticism of the media. Of further importance for the analysis is the examination of the context in which the newspapers are building their truth discourse. Therefore, references to events or speakers within the text are collected and considered. As presented earlier, Foucault has pointed out that truth is further created by the contrasting of competing discourses. Therefore, the next category includes the reference to the creator and consumer of the competing discourse, the contrasting of the truth established by the media with untruth and the presentation of competing discourses. Since it is assumed that the media engages in building a truth discourse in response to untruth, the discourse on untruth is expected to be characterized as competing. Not only certain characteristics of the presentation of a competing discourse are collected within this category, but also the way in which the speaker, creator or even the consumer of the competing discourse is presented. It expected to find

differences between these characterizations among different types of articles and newspapers. In the next category, the way, if and to what extent, the media is defending its role as truth producing infrastructure or political actor is examined. This is a major element of the analysis, because findings within this category allow to draw conclusions on the extent to which the media has identified itself with its role as truth producer and the importance it attributes to it. This category will also consider other discursive elements the newspapers use to defend themselves. It is expected to find that the defense is not limited to the role of truth infrastructure, which is why the category allows to collect elements of the defense that would be attributed to a rather political and educational role of the media. Further, it is necessary to investigate how the newspapers connect their truth discourse to the wide-spread acknowledged threat and pressure on journalism. These threats may occur from attacks by Donald Trump, criticism from other newspapers, criticism by the public and currently low levels of trust in news outlets. Depending on the amount of appearances of these criticisms in the articles as well as reactions to them, it can be assessed which threats are prioritized by news outlets and if they have motivated the papers to react and solve the problem. Further, the coding scheme includes a category on how the media presents the discourse it builds as representation of truth. The main question is whether they entitle it explicitly as truth, or expect their readers to figure out themselves. Of course, truth constitutes one of the most important elements of truth discourses, and it is interesting to find out if the media entitles its construction of truth discourses as truth or if it relies on facts and data to speak for itself. Lastly, it is expected to find discursive elements in which the media examines the possibility to reestablish trust and its ability to function as a truth making infrastructure.

Looking only for certain words such as truth or lie in the articles would be insufficient to analyze the entire discourse, since in articles one often finds (metaphorical) expressions, describing the same phenomenon but without employing the characteristic language, which is why the categories allow for a more qualitative and broader analysis. Nevertheless, the coding scheme presents some of the words that can be a highlighter for the elements. In this study, all articles are analyzed for the discursive elements presented above, which are then collected in a tabular overview, in order to receive insights on the distribution, character and differences between categories and articles.

4. Analysis

The following chapter will elaborate on the most interesting, odd and important observations that were found in the analysis of the articles on the basis of the coding scheme (compare Appendix III for a detailed presentation of this approach[3]). The point this analysis is trying to make is the extent to which the media engages as a truth producing infrastructure. In order to establish this, the chapter will follow the presentation and integration of the four main elements for the discourse.

The first part of this chapter starts out with the analysis of the media's presentation of its role as both a political and truth making actor. Additionally, it will identify the assumptions the media makes on the reasons for the attacks and the need for defense given that in post-truth politics democracy is at stake. In a next step, the second section will discuss the perceived threat to the media based on the role defined in the previous part. Further it will point at the implications thereof and outline what the newspapers have identified as strategy to face these dangers. Thirdly, the media's effort to build a truth discourse in reaction to its role and the threats identified in previous sections is presented. Also in this part, it is analyzed if public criticism of newspapers can be confirmed according to the way they establish truth and whether the outlets stay true to their developed strategy. In the last and fourth part of the analysis, the media's presentation and characterization of the creator and consumer of the competing discourse is shown. In this section, it will also be analyzed to what extent the media remains neutral in its reports despite Trumps aggression and public criticism of unfair reporting.

4.1 The media as political actor rather than truth building infrastructure

The theoretical background has identified the media as a political actor which has an important, new role in post-truth politics. In the first analysis section, the focus will be set on the media's defense of its political and truth-building role. Therefore, these two roles will successively be analyzed based on the discourse built in the articles, pointing out how the media establishes its role in reaction to attacks by Trump. Further this section will display the reasons the newspapers have identified which make the defense necessary in the first place. This section will thereby also highlight what is at stake when the media is attacked the way it currently is and the results of the continuing of the administration's current behavior.

In the analysis of the articles, the repeated occurrence of a certain phenomenon let to the alteration of another category in the coding scheme. This phenomenon is the engagement of the media to not only strongly act as a political actor, but also when pursuing this role, to have an educational aspect in mind. Repeatedly, the articles engaged in educating the readers on the way politics should be made or point at tactics employed by politicians. In order to identify false claims, often the truth on

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[3] please be aware that Appendix III can be found in another document, since the detailed presentation is to extensive for this thesis

how political decisions are achieved, when and by participation of which actors, is presented. This can be observed as an expression of the effort to build a truth discourse by outlining the political reality. The presentation of tactics as a tool to let the public realize the truth behind certain statements and actions is often enacted differently than a neutral presentation of data and facts. In part, this educational aspect can be attributed to the fact that the media focusses the defense of its role not to its ability to build truth, but to being a political actor.

When it comes to presenting the new political reality as a consequence of the new Trump presidency, the articles shed light on all sectors of the government and regular proceedings. Special emphasis is on actions or proceedings of Trump and his administration that differ from proceedings by former presidents. This is nicely shown in this sequence:

> "presidential speeches to joint sessions of Congress normally get meticulously scrubbed to ensure accuracy. In past administrations, even minor misstatements have sometimes turned into major issues" (Article 2.7).

This statement highlights the mayor elements essential for the sensation: first, pointing out how past administrations have acted, and second, contrasting this with the lack of accuracy of the current administration, and the shift which has taken place when todays misstatements have become nothing less but normal and nothing close to major issues. The media does not directly criticize the new administration, but educates people on the way proceedings used to be and thereby formulates not only criticism on the leader, but especially the lack of attention to establishing truth with its speeches and actions. Still, the presentation of new tactics and political actions in this category has often received a critical undertone, especially but not limited to editorials (compare for example Articles 1.3, 2.7, 2.8).

Another important element of the media's engagement as a political actor is the defense of other governmental institutions and the misgiving voiced towards Trump interaction and proceeding with these institutions. Some articles are very direct and assessing rather than just describing Trump politics: "Trump's shocking lack of respect for those fundamental rules and institutions on which our government is based" (Article 2.13). Interestingly, despite having selected articles on the same topics from the different news outlets, some articles use the political context of the article to make references to older actions within the context, such as the critique of Trump's attitude towards the judiciary and again contrasting it to former presidents' habitude and democratic rules:

> "Although presidents at times critique judicial rulings, they rarely take personal swipes at individual members of the federal bench. Trump's breach of protocol could have a chilling affect on the judiciary, which constitutionally rules independently of the executive branch.; "We don't have so-called judges. We don't have so-called senators. We don't have so-called

presidents. We have people from three different branches of government who take an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution" (Article 1.1).

Current political reality has been characterized as dangerous to democracy by all the media outlets. Even conservative newspapers, which have been much less critical towards the Trump administration, hint at the dangers of the strong hospitality between the opposing parties. Partisan bias can be identified as a reoccurring discursive theme pinpointed by media. The threat to democracy is presented as the corrosive dialogue in which widespread prejudice against the other party results in lack of faith in government and its ability to function properly.

Partisan bias is also identified as strongly influencing whom people perceive as trustworthy, which is further stirred by the Trump administration's harsh attacks on opponents. The development is strongly attributed to the president's behavior, by showing that when former presidents have engaged in building national unity after elections, in times of Trump "a striking display of invective and grievance at the dawn of a presidency" is established (Article 4.4). The media describe partisan conflict as a result of the development characterized by similar attributes as those established in the theory chapter of this thesis on post-truth politics. The argument repeatedly made by news outlets reminds of the characterization of illusionary democracy:

> "In the long term, the damage done to trust by the normalization of untruth may threaten the social contract on which democracy itself rests. […] In the longer term, the feedback loop of lies begetting rumor will threaten the foundation of democracy" (Article 6.11).

Evidently, media outlets are fully aware of the characteristics of post-truth politics and employ their knowledge thereof as a tool to reestablish the need for truth by presenting its elements to the public in a fashion that establishes meaning for more than just the political sphere but also in personal lives of the readers, pointing to a future in which the only source of information is the government.

As has been explained in the theory chapter (compare section 2.2), the geography of news and truth has changed, as well as the temporality of its consumption. The media have worked this point into their assessment and effort to build truth. They acknowledge the difficulties arising from these possibilities and side with the American people in judging the presidents non-stop use of social media and reactiveness as bad (cf. Article 4.6).

Strikingly, the media's defense has been mostly focused on its political character instead of presenting itself as a truth maker. Its effort to position its outlets as an actor able to restore truth is often limited to the provision of fact-checking articles, a discursive tool further examined in a next section. Reactions to the many attacks by Trump are few, and mostly to be found in editorials or articles which are not directly linked to insults or statements. Most present is the reaction to Trump's claim that terrorist attacks have been underreported by the media, a claim easily contradicted by the

news outlets through reference to earlier articles. This defense often takes places in a rather subtle manner, with newspapers no longer harshly criticizing or discursively out bursting as Trump tends to do, but through tiny remarks, sometimes even only added in brackets:

> "(One case in point offered by the White House was the 2015 attack in San Bernardino, which in fact received intensive worldwide news coverage. The Los Angeles Times won a Pulitzer Prize for its reporting on the subject)" (Article 2.14).

In editorials and opinions, the media is more direct in formulating its defense of the role as a truth producer.

> "All of us who are in the business of holding leaders accountable must redouble our efforts to defend the truth from his cynical assaults" (Article 2.13).

There is further a presence of basic articles on the implications of post-truth politics for the media and its influence on journalism. The news outlets use broader arguments, such as the new teaching methods in school as a reaction to the undermining of truth in modern times (cf. Article 5.5), the challenges for journalism students (Article 5.17) or the reasoning of newspapers' editors to point at the truth making effort journalism is pursuing (cf. Article 5.6).

The strong divergence between the different ideas of mind because of the partisan bias have already been pointed at. Still, the medias engagement to defend itself as political actor is not only a consequence thereof, but often a reaction to its characterization as opposition (cf. Article 5.1). News outlets identify the problem created by this discursive element, despite acknowledging the historical difficult relationship between politicians and the media, and point to the fact that if the media is pushed into an opposition position by Trump, trust in the papers is even further decreased. Conservative papers advert to the fact that large parts of the media have maneuvered themselves into this position by taking a clear stand and position already during the campaign, providing readers with no longer objective reporting and now pay the price. But liberal newspapers, too, have reflected on this changed and not fortunate position, incorporating references to famous peoples' support of the media as being a political actor (like George W. Bush in Article 5.16), which should not be characterized as the opposition. The consequence of this discursive element is the even greater erosion of trust from those people who have been critical towards the papers and have gained further skepticism through the repeated attacks by Trump. The media finds itself in a difficult position, with critique on unfair coverage of the new administration as a result of the medias oppositional role from one part of the population as presented earlier, and critique of too soft coverage and too few efforts to hold the president accountable from another part of the American people:

"Gerard Baker on Monday aggressively defended the newspaper against criticism that its reporting on President Donald Trump has been soft, saying the coverage has aimed to hold the new administration accountable without becoming "oppositional" (Article 5.6).

One of the most striking elements of the discourse build by the media when reestablishing its role as truth producing infrastructure is the resignation and growing disinterest presented in reactions to the always reoccurring attacks and false claims by President Trump. The media seems to take a "we do no longer care" attitude, having heard these things so often that they lose the ambition to protest. Discursive elements such as "repeatedly reported" have become a part of the media's truth discourses. This sensation is nicely captured in the following and last quotation of this section:

"There should be, however, legitimate questions about whether that reporting should include blanket coverage of the next speech Mr. Trump gives in which he calls honest journalists dishonest or "the opposition." Those kinds of polemical statements are no longer "news" (defined as "new") but rather part of a repetitive, antipress, negative branding campaign" (Article 4.11).

As this section has shown, the media's focus of defense in reaction to attacks by Trump has often been on its role as political actor, pointing to the partisan bias intensified by the administration and the characterization of news outlets as fake and opposition. Next to this, an effort to reposition media as a truth producing infrastructure can be observed. What appears most odd is the growing resignation among the papers to the repeated attacks and discrediting antipress campaign. The newspapers use educational aspects to underline their defense, aiming also at the people for recreating trust. The idea of persuading the president that the outlets are not fake has been pushed behind the media's effort to convince the public of this point. Interestingly, in this context the media has elaborated on the consequences of post-truth politics impersonated by Trump, endangering not only free media, but with that also democracy. The key point here is that if the abilities of media as both political actor and a trustworthy truth builder are called into question, democracy is at stake.

4.2 The perceived threat to the media and what to do about it

The following section will elaborate on the perceived threat to the media, its implications and what newspapers have identified as strategy to face these dangers. In the previous section, it has already been pointed at the reoccurring theme of the media's defense of its role as truth producer and political actor. This section will look in more detail into the discursive elements identified by the media that make the defense necessary in the first place, looking at the perceived threats to the media's ability to shape public opinion and its suggestions on how to react.

"By branding reporters as liars, he [President Trump] apparently hopes to discredit, disrupt or bully into silence anyone who challenges his version of reality. By undermining trust in news organizations and delegitimizing journalism and muddling the facts so that Americans no longer know who to believe, he can deny and distract and help push his administration's far-fetched storyline" (Article 2.15).

Most striking for this section is the very strong presence of quotations of attacks on the media by Trump in the newspaper articles. 52 articles incorporate these attacks in their discourse, through quotations of statements or references to the president's Twitter posts. As has been pointed at above, the direct reaction or rationalization to these attacks is sparse, but the repeated appearance is a discursive element of its own. By including the attacks, the media can contrast the unreasonable attacks with its own objective reporting. The presence of these statements in the articles points to the fact that media is far from ignoring the aggression, but does not want to place itself on the same level by moving beyond objectivity. They react indirectly to the attacks, by grafting statements of other people which represent their opinion, such as in this case:

"McCain criticized Trump's comments about how "the fake news media" is "an enemy of the American people," saying that's how dictators get started. "I hate the press. I hate you especially. But the fact is we need you. We need a free press. We must have it. It's vital," McCain said. "If you want to preserve – I'm very serious now – if you want to preserve democracy as we know it, you have to have a free and many times adversarial press. And without it, I am afraid that we would lose so much of our individual liberties over time. That's how dictators get started" (Article 3.4).

But attacks by Trump are not the only threat to the media in post-truth politics. The decrease of trust of the public in mainstream media has been identified in the theoretical considerations and expected to be found in the articles as well. Surprisingly, this element has received considerable less attention than aggression by Trump (only 15 out of 95 articles mention this element, although some of these quite extensively). Certainly, the threat by public lack of trust is not articulated in a comparable controversial and aggressive manner, but the results of current research and polls should indicate the need for media to deal with this threat. Still, the media has put very few efforts in including this element in its discourse. Often, when it is expressed in articles, it has a direct reference to Trump supporters, mirroring again the attacks by Trump himself and the political implications thereof:

"Such attacks are politically expedient at a moment when trust in the news media is as low as it's ever been, according to Gallup. And they're especially resonant with Trump's supporters, many of whom see journalists as part of the swamp that needs to be drained" (Article 2.15).

The media's coverage of the public deficit of trust suggests that they see this threat only coming from Trump supporters, which would further stir the partisan bias. Articles point to the outbursts of Trump supporters at his rallies, were the people have taken up his slogans to attack the press. In addition to that, news outlets have identified the changed news and information environment as a reason for the difficulties they are now in. With decreasing trust of the public in traditional newspapers and the provision of information in echo-chambers, media experiences a considerable decline of importance (cf. Article 5.5). Interestingly, some news outlets have engaged in research on the topic of their own (reflecting the lack of scientific work on the topic), trying to figure out whether public criticism on the media is a result of the media's reporting on Trump. Indeed, findings suggest that the idea that Trump has been treated unfairly by the press seems to play a crucial role in further decline of trustworthiness (cf. Articles 5.13 and 5.15).

These findings also have found their way into the discourse through newspapers' criticism on other news outlets. While liberal newspapers' criticism is mostly limited to criticism of journalism's shortcomings and privileges, conservative newspapers choose certain news outlets and articles for direct attacks. This criticism often reflects the denunciation of Trump, addressing the lack of sources, suggesting that a Democratic candidate would have received a much different, fairer news coverage and blaming the papers for having a double standard (cf. Articles 3.1, 3.2). The conservative papers' claims stand in strong contrast to the way other media outlets have characterized themselves and their reporting. Conservative newspapers speak of "volcanic rage" of news outlets when reacting to Trumps accusations and claims, a perception supported by parts of the public but difficult to be found in the analysis. Instead, it was startling how calm the reactions have been among most of the articles. Contrary to this, liberal newspapers deride the conservatives' efforts to engage in fact-checking, undermining their ability to so and criticizing their claim of doing investigative reporting.

Given all this criticism, it is interesting to find that newspapers have already thought about possibilities to counteract the development. An important element of these measures are the fact-checks of newspapers. Some of the outlets have even established an entire database, where the reader can filter among the topics and compare repeated false claims. In addition, many newspaper outlets invite the reader to send claims which he or she wants to have fact checked, increasing the right to co-determination and making the articles more appealing. Essentially, the answer what can be done is reflected in a statement by CNN, which has been echoed by many newspapers of this analysis: "We'll keep reporting regardless" (Article 4.11). In article 1.9 the following is to be found: "It will require of us the guts to remember that truth matters. You see, our job is not to be anti-Trump, but, rather, anti-bovine excreta."

News outlets acknowledge the need of self-examination and evolution, be it in greater engagement in journalistic practices and objectivity and taking Trump seriously, but also appeal to the citizens:

"Investigate. Read. Write. Listen. Speak. Think. Be wary of those who disparage the investigators, the readers, the writers, the listeners, the speakers and the thinkers. Be suspicious of those who confuse reality with reality TV, and those who repeat falsehoods while insisting, against all evidence, that they are true. To defend freedom, demand fact" (Article 2.14).

As this episode has shown, the media ascribes importance to the categories of threat differently. It prioritizes the dangers posed by the attacks of Trump and pays considerable fewer attention to the public's criticism and lack of trust. To a large part, it contemplates public criticism as a repetition or mirroring of Trump's aggression by its supporters. Findings of the outlets suggest, that the criticism of the public is not only motivated by Trump, but also by the media's coverage of the president and before of his campaign. Even though there is criticism of newspapers on other institutions of their branch, reactions to the criticism are not taken up in the articles.

As a reaction to the threats, the media has identified the pursuit of truth without being anti-Trump but acknowledges the need for the public to also be critical on what is presented as truth and not easily persuaded.

4.3 Using facts and data to establish truth

When the extent to which the media builds its truth discourse is examined, it is indispensable to look at the way truth is presented by the newspapers. Therefore, the following section will analyze the extent the media supports its claim of being a truth producing infrastructure using data and the increase of reliability.

The rather few statements defending media as a truth producer seem to allude that in post-truth politics media is more concerned with its status as political actor rather than the ability to build truth. Remarkably, this does not reflect what can be observed in the analysis. The media is very engaged in presenting truth and supporting statements with facts and data. The different articles employ different tactics to establish truth. While in some articles, mostly in the fact checks, false statements are quoted and directly analyzed, in others the truth is built into the storyline of the article.

An odd finding is that the word 'truth' is mostly present in editorials, where newspapers contrast reality and developments of untruth, such as the institutionalization of lies, with the importance of truth. In contrast, the words 'true' or 'truth' can hardly be found in fact-checks. Although there is a strong presence of the words fact, statistics and data, the media presents them without precisely stating that what they are contrasting to is not the truth.

In this context, it is also surprising to find one of Trumps most central criticism on the press disapproved. He repeatedly criticized the dishonesty of the press as well as the absence of reliable sources for their claims. Instead, what could be found in the analysis, is the strong effort the outlets make to connect their claims to acknowledged sources. They present a broad variety of informants,

experts and authorities. The articles include statements from politicians of the present and past administrations, derive facts and data from federal departments, agencies, committees and their statistics, from opinion polls and research. These sources are not limited to America, often there is also reference to European data and statements. The criticism of 'sources say' journalism can hardly be confirmed. It says hardly, because there is a certain shortcoming in sources described as 'a police spokesman says', as well as the conservative newspapers collection of sources, which is mostly limited to political actors. The authors try to increase the scientific status and reliability of their articles by including many references to university professors. Seemingly this contributes to greater accuracy, although it may be argued that these references to science hardly cite scientific articles checked by the scientific community on their truthfulness, but rather statements from university professors on the articles' topics.

Another element, the strong presence of fact-checking articles, raises questions on its effectiveness as a discursive element to establish truth. It is worth noting here that the mostly conservative newspaper presents an exclusion to this claim: no fact-check article could have been found there. This can be ascribed to the position of the outlet presented in the articles: it does not understand itself as being part of the fake media, and despite acknowledging the presidents lose play with the truth, does not see the need to re-establish truth. Interestingly, the other outlets have asked themselves the question of efficiency already and have formulated articles and own research. The New York Times, one of the outlets strongest engaged in fact-checking, has published an entire article on the efficacy of fact-checks and the trouble of living in a post-fact age. The article suggests that in previous research the correction of people's false beliefs has produced a contrary effect by making them cling to their opinion and thereby proving fact-checking ineffective. Other researchers found the contrary effect. As consequence of this discord, the effectiveness of corrective information in reducing false beliefs and its dependence on political beliefs has gained new attention and became the centre of a new, which measured the decline in false beliefs as a reaction to the presentation of corrective information among Clinton and Trump voters. The study has found a decline in false beliefs and only partial evidence that questioning the validity of a correction can undermine its effects.

The finding of this study presented in the article can be interpreted as a good sign for newspapers' approach to establishing truth. In this analysis, about one fifth of the articles are headlined 'fact-check' and even more of the articles in the analysis employ the same journalistic fact-checking style. Proving the fact checks inefficient for reducing false beliefs and establishing truth would have seriously decreased the efficacy of newspapers tools of the creation of truth, since the number of fact-checks they provide indicates the value they attribute to this tool of shaping the discourse. In this case, this section can be concluded with a statement of the articles:

"The truth, in this instance, isn't dead yet" (Article 6.14).

Summing up, the analysis in this part has proved that the media shows commitment in reestablishing truth. The striking absence of the word 'truth' in many articles does not lessen the effort of the outlets to use objective data and facts to prove claims wrong. In addition, the endeavor to employ a great variety of sources, even trying to increase the scientific reliability through the introduction of University personnel, can be attributed to the media's engagement of building a trustworthy truth discourse. It is relevant for the discourse to note the many fact-checks and attention to their efficacy and the objective discursive manner the outlets are using for making their point.

4.4 The media between open criticism in editorials and the effort to report objectively

As it has been outlined in the previous sections, criticism on the media is at a new peak. Thus, it is important to take the medias approach to react and present the competing discourse into consideration for examining the medias effort to be a truth maker. The following section will therefore analyze the media's presentation of the creator of the competing discourse and its ability to stay objective in its reports, even in the face of threatening attacks by Trump.

It is especially the attacks by President Donald Trump which have pushed news outlets into a difficult position. It is on the one hand important for them to be open for evolution and to take up criticism, on the other hand much of the aggression towards the media is far from constructive and perceived as a antipress branding campaign (Article 4.11). The media has been struggling with how to respond to their opposition role and the discrediting it experiences. In addition, the media has not only to deal with the identified threat to itself, but is facing a crisis of democracy resulting from the threats of the new administration's post-truth politics. News outlets are caught in between the need to protest and raising attention for the threats, their reactions to the constant discrediting and the journalistic ambition and value to report objectively:

> "Given the very real dangers posed by this administration, we should be indefatigable in covering Trump, but shouldn't let his bullying attitude persuade us to be anything other than objective, fair, open-minded and dogged. [...] we must be courageous in our reporting and resolute in our pursuit of the truth" (Article 2.15).

As can be observed in the analysis, the media is very ambitious to differentiate between its opinion and objective reporting. It has identified opinion sections and editorials as a place to give vent to its anger and position itself contrary to the Trump falsehoods.

> "The role of an institution like the Los Angeles Times (or the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal or CNN) is to be independent and aggressive in pursuit of the truth — not to take sides. The editorial pages are the exception: Here we can and should express our opinions

about Trump. But the news pages, which operate separately, should report intensively without prejudice, partiality or partisanship" (Article 2.15).

Along with this differentiation between editorials and reports, it will be examined whether the papers were engaging in accordance to their aim. Indeed, in editorials many of the discursive elements expected to be found for describing the creator of the competing discourse can be observed. The characterization ranges from describing the president as a product of the media and reality TV, a liar who seems to not know the difference between his statements and the truth or distinguishes between real and unreal, Trump being unpredictable, dishonest, unprepared, unsuited, overly reactive to anything he hears or sees in the news, both a liar and a fool, who is acting on a logic of his own. Some of these editorials appear quite discrediting, comparing the presidents holding on to its lies to a drunk clinging to his gin bottle (Article 1.9 and 5.20). An interesting observation is the growing number of such editorials the longer Trump is president. It is worth noting that among the newspapers one has even published an entire series of editorials on Trump and Untruth.

Next to this it could be observed that in some articles the characterization is not limited to the creator of the untruth, but also on the consumer and believer of such. Media outlets contribute the success of fake news among many consumers to the increasing polarization in the country, in which different partisan groups are refracted by a different reality than others (Article 4.2). In addition, the partisan bias leads people to believe stories devaluing the other partisan team. Some of these articles call the intelligence of consumers of fake news into question, but acknowledge the rise of conspiracy theories and fake news more strongly to a change of trust in organizations and unity in America, happening already before Trump but providing him with the circumstances to be successful with his way of politics. Still, discordant on which exact factor has led to the current state of affairs, news outlets point to the fact that a certain part of the population is willing to believe anything that fits their preconceptions (Article 4.3).

In addition to these themes, editorials reflect on the developments and challenges of the institutionalization of news, including the establishment of an alternative media ecosystem (cf. Article 1.11). They identify the major motives for the establishment of such outlets as both commercial and ideological, trying to make money as well as to get attention for the political agendas of anti-globalism. In contrast to the opinion articles, reports try to be much more objective. The word 'liar' was nowhere to be found, possibly explained by the situation stated in Article 5.6:

"he [Wall Street Journal Editor in Chief Gerard Baker] said the Journal isn't banned from using the word "lie" in connection with Mr. Trump or his administration but said the bar is high, because the word connotes an intention to deceive that is hard to prove" (Article 5.6).

Alluringly, the non-opinion articles almost appear shy in their characterization of Trump, contradicting conservative paper's claims that the media is more interested in hating Trump than reporting the news (cf. Article 3.2). Especially in fact-checks, there is hardly any depiction of the creator or consumer of the discourse to be found. Here, the articles remain especially neutral, proceeding by presenting the original statement as a citation without summarizing it and mostly contradicting it with facts and figures. In other articles it appears, although it is also very limited. The media uses citations of people related to the theme of the article, to present opinions on the statements. It can be assumed, that these statements are in line with their own perception and used as a discursive tool to evaluate the creator of the discourse without the author losing his objectivity. In choosing these citations, the articles are not as reluctant as in describing the author, including statements calling the president's credibility, his ability to keep promises and his psyche into question. An exception to this observation are the articles of one newspaper which appear to be editorial according to their language, but none of the articles in the analysis has been marked as such (Paper 4).

An odd aspect when it comes to presenting the competing discourse is the repeated reference of the articles to the difficult position Trump's employees in the White House have gotten into because of his claims. Many articles present it as if the spokespeople and staff members are bound to present only what Trump likes, both to him and the public, and additionally having to backup and clarify each of his statements. Paradoxical, it can be observed that many articles, when publishing articles on statements by Trump, refer to the backup he achieves from the White House staff, which often tries to clarify, but sometimes becomes the creator of untruth itself.

As this section has pointed out, many of the news outlets have a clear opinion on Trump as the creator of the competing discourse as well as on his relationship with the truth. Nevertheless, this attitude is to a great extent only shown in the editorials. In fact-checks and reports the media is zealous in meeting the self-established aim of remaining objective and neutral, using citations as a discursive tool to hint at their own position. Interestingly, the characterization is not limited to the creator of the discourse, but often extents to the consumer and the backup of Trump by the White House. All in all, the creator of the competing discourse has been given fewer attentions in the articles than expected. Although it is always mentioned what and whose statements the articles are referring to, there is only few description or evaluation of the creator as such. The media seems to rely on proving fake news and statements wrong, but without discrediting the creator of the claims.

5. Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the assumptions of the theory are put together with the findings of the analysis, taking the situation outlined in the introduction into account and giving an outlook on the implications of the research.

In order to make a claim on whether the media engages as a truth maker in post-truth politics, the conclusion will lead through the findings of the analysis. It will first have to be shown if and to what extent the media is aware of the post-truth environment, how this attention is reflected in the articles and what conclusions to media draws from this. Therefore, it will be first looked at how the media defines its changed role, how it evaluates criticism and stands up to it, how it formulates its strategy to defend it and how it presents the implications to the public. In the next step, it will be presented how the media builds its truth discourse, which elements it uses and whether public criticism on the outlets is correct.

As the analysis has shown, the media's focus of defense in reaction to attacks by Trump has often been on its role as political actor. As an element of post-truth politics and a reason for the defense of the political role, outlets are pointing to the partisan bias intensified by the current administration and the characterization of news outlets as fake and opposition. Next to this, the analysis has shown that an effort to reposition media as a truth producing infrastructure can be observed. Consistent with Sambrook's (2013) assumption that the mistrust between politics and media is the consequence of many reasons, the media describes different threats to its role but ascribes importance to the categories of threat differently. It acknowledges the changed news environment as a result of the exponential growth of media, leading to more competition for public attention. Still, news outlets prioritize the dangers posed by the attacks of Trump over the difficulties of the changed environment, and pay considerable fewer attention to the public's criticism and lack of trust. Thereby, Sambrook's assumption that politicians have seemed to fear attack and therefor have attacked the press in response, making the relationship increasingly dysfunctional, can be approved by the considerable space the presentation and evaluation of Trump's aggression has received in the newspapers' discourse. The newspapers use educational elements to underline their defense, aiming at the people's understanding of political reality in order to recreate trust. The idea of persuading the president that the outlets are not fake has been pushed behind the media's effort to convince the public of this point. Interestingly, in this educational context the media has quite extensively elaborated on the consequences of post-truth politics impersonated by Trump, endangering not only free media, but with that also democracy. As Fish (2016) has repeatedly noted in his 'illusory democracy' theory, when politicians make misleading claims or withhold relevant information, then voters can hardly be characterized as informed, which makes it also impossible for them to give consent. This problem of post-truth politics is addressed by media outlets through the educational discursive elements. The media pursues an educational function in its role as a political actor and truth maker, informing the public on disparities between the current and former administrations and the relationship with truth,

doing so in a subtly critical way. The key point the media is trying to make is that if the abilities of media as both political actor and a trustworthy truth builder are called into question, democracy is at stake. In conformity with Fish (2016), assuming that post-truth politics have significant consequences for international as well as national politics, media outlets have given ample attention to the relationship of Trump with his international allies, reflecting on the difficulties of foreign leaders to trust an American leader who is characterized as playing loose with the truth and whose credibility is questioned.

Consentaneous with Dean's theory that the media is to blame for its downward trend in addition to the difficulties arising from increased competition, findings of the analysis suggest that the criticism of the public is motivated by the media's coverage of the president and his campaign. Such blaming journalists for the decrease of trust in media is a considerable element repeated by criticism of conservative newspapers on other outlets. Nevertheless, despite this criticism of newspapers on other institutions of their branch, reactions to the criticism are not taken up in the articles and the discourse of liberal newspapers.

Having figured out through the media's defense of its role that newspapers want to engage anew in being a truth producing infrastructure, it will now be examined to what extent the media meets this strategy. As Hall (2006) has pointed out, truth is created by the struggle between competing discourses, in which often power and not facts are making things 'true'. Conforming this assumption, the newspapers have contemplated public criticism to a large part as a repetition or mirroring of Trump's aggression by his supporters, proving that Trump's power as president persuades people of alternative facts which are entirely divorced from evidence. As the analysis has shown, media takes up the struggle between the competing discourses of its own and Trump in its discursive building of truth. Many of the news outlets have presented a clearly disapproving opinion on Trump as the creator of the competing discourse as well as on his relationship with the truth. Nevertheless, this attitude is only shown in the editorials. In fact-checks and reports the media is zealous in meeting the self-established aim of remaining objective and neutral, using citations as a discursive tool to hint at their own position. As has been noted earlier, the characterization is not limited to the creator of the discourse, but often extents to the consumer and the backup of Trump by the White House. All in all, although the media presents the competing discourse extensively, the creator of the competing discourse has been given fewer attentions in the articles than expected. Although it is always mentioned what and whose statements the articles are referring to, there is only few description or evaluation of the creator as such. The media seems to rely on proving fake news and statements wrong, but without discrediting the creator of the claims. This can be attributed to the strategy the media has formulated as a reaction to the threats, having identified the need for the pursuit of truth without being anti-Trump while acknowledging the need for the public to also be critical on what is presented as truth and not easily persuaded.

In contrast to Sambrook's (2013) prediction that the spiral of hype and sensation can lead to the later explained post-truth environment, where political rhetoric and media coverage are entirely divorced from facts or evidence, the analysis has shown that media outlets show strong effort to meet false political rhetoric with truth discourses. The analysis has proven that the media shows commitment in reestablishing truth. As has been noted earlier, the striking absence of the word 'truth' in many articles does not lessen the effort of the outlets to use objective data and facts to prove claims wrong. This is in accordance with the expectation noted in section 2.1, noting that truth is a concept many human activities depend upon, although not explicitly making it subject of discussion but rather assuming its nature. In conformity with Hall's (2006) argument that those who produce the discourse have the power to make it true by enforcing its scientific status and validity, the journalists show great endeavor to employ a great variety of sources, even trying to increase the scientific reliability of their articles through the introduction of University personnel. This can be attributed to the media's engagement of building a trustworthy truth discourse and contradicting 'sources say' criticism. In contrast to the identification of the daily news' poor memory as a systemic problem by Sambrook (2013), describing media with having a brief attention span, in the articles analyzed the media has engaged with quite some effort to cover even complex issues and has repeatedly proven its memory - in reference to contradicting criticism of dishonesty or lack of reporting - on topics such as terror attacks or Trump's wiretapping claim.

Sambrook's (2013) assumption that fact-checking is a fraught kind of journalism, one that challenges reporters' traditional roles as objective observers and places them at the center of white-hot, real-time debates can be confirmed within the analysis. Through repeated fact-checking of president Trump's claims, the media has increasingly become a target of Trump's outbursts and discrediting. In their fact checks, newspapers try hard to raise attention to the "uneasy attitude" of politicians impersonated by Trump towards "information, truth, evidence and expert opinion" as has been hypothesized by Sambrook (2013). It is relevant for the discourse to note that despite these threats, the number of fact-checks among the articles is high and that outlets have paid considerable attention to their efficacy and their objective discursive manner used for making the point. What appears most odd in the analysis is the growing resignation among the papers to the repeated attacks and discrediting antipress campaign.

The findings of this research suggest that there is still a considerable lack of knowledge and research on the development of media discourses in post-truth environments. Some of the theoretical assumptions, such as predicting a divorce of media coverage and truth could not be confirmed with this study. The study contributes to the scientific community by establishing insights on the discursive elements employed by the media to react to post-truth politics. A particularly notable aspect is the newspapers' reach out for the public's knowledge and appeal to be critical, despite the article's lack of reflecting on public criticism and decrease of trust. It needs to be emphasized that in this study the media has stayed true to its ambition of establishing truth through objective reporting and is resilient in

its distinction between editorials and reports. A contradictory element is the growing resignation on the aggression by Trump with the highlighted engagement of the media to oppose to the ignorance of truth. While the newspapers point to the fact that this repeated antipress campaign can hardly be described as news anymore, the number and intensity of articles on the dangers of this system of post-truth for democracy increases.

Summing up, the study has shed light on the truth building efforts and the elements of the medias truth discourse within the set frame. With Trump's presidency still evolving, the need for further research and observation of the changes deserves attention. It is mentionable that the issue has reached the scientific community as it is highlighted by the huge funds granted to research projects on the theme of fake news.

When the work on this thesis was started, trust in newspapers was at historical low with only 20 per cent in news institutions in the USA. In June 2017, a new poll was published by Gallup (Newport, 2017), in which news institutions have regained trust by seven per cent. Whether this can be interpreted as a first success of news outlets engagement of reestablishing trust and truth may be floated as a suggestion, further trends will by necessary to evaluate it. Also in the meantime, reactions to Trump attacks have gained a new intensity as for example by the publication of a Los Angeles Times book titled "Our Dishonest President". Further analyses could research on the development created by an intensified post-truth environment and should not be reluctant to compare to Europe, since with upcoming elections in Germany and past elections France this year, pressure on journalism and the media has increased and rising populism has created an environment for the growth of post-truth. When addressing the topic in further studies, it would be interesting to further include other mass media than newspapers, as for example television programs such as CNN or Fox News. Each of them plays a distinctive role in the Trump presidency: trust goes to Fox News, and distrust is highly projected on CNN, with 16 Tweets within the last 4 months calling it fake media or enemy (Drösser, 2017). Next to this, the discursive elements identified in this study can lay the groundwork for future research. Especially the distinction between the media as political actor and as truth producing infrastructure deserves a more nuanced analysis. Beyond this, the element of post-truth as a whole can deserve more attention: due to the focus of this study on false statements of Trump and the medias reaction, many earlier articles discussing the concept of post-truth had to be let aside, but could motivate further research.

Nevertheless, what we can take with us from this study and its discourse analysis is that we need a strong media as well as an educated, critical public, in order to being able to defend truth in a time where one of the most powerful man of the world shows such a great animosity towards the truth and the media - being an outlet able to hold him accountable.

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Appendix I: Data Set

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Appendix II: Ranking of newspapers

Newspapers \ Categories	Number of Pullitzer Prizes	Points in Circulation (1 = fewest readers, 10 = most)	Political leaning, trust from audience (Liberal blue, conservative red)	Criticism by Trump (1 = existent, 0 = not found)	Total	Rank number
The New York Times	10	9	5	1	25	1
Washington Post	5	4	4	1	14	2
Wall Street Journal	2	8	1	1	12	3
USA Today	0	10	1	0	11	4
Los Angeles Times	3	7	0	0	10	5
New York Post	0	6	2	0	8	6
Chicago Tribune	1	5	0	0	6	7
Newsday	0	3	0	0	3	8
Daily News	0	2	0	0	2	9
am New York	0	1	0	0	1	10